

the eastern poets visit us

with small smiles and
unsure how to move in the loose
clothes lightweight and un-
-constricting self-conscious about
their forearms exposed to the sun
but smiling or their mouths
pulled into little o's
like fish out of their natural
element
they are marvelous!
i see their spines
like barbed wire bending a little
growing suddenly a profusion
of plants all meant
for friends back east
their spines sprout yucca
they grow yellow acacia
their fingers turn into green
dwarf cacti there is
eucalyptus jacaranda
and always no no
they are ophelias floating
in the stream of their dying
weaving exotic weeds
about themselves making
themselves into little spectaculars
what else can they do?

-- gerda penfold

Echo Park, CA

The Feeding

A few catch their food in mid-air.
Some find it
scattered on the sand.
Some fight for it
beating out with their wings
slashing with their beaks.

Two brown paper sacks
warm with the sun
empty.